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DE RUEHSG #0720/01 2101703
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 291703Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5287
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 4095
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2503
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1605
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1025
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 2190
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 6307
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4505
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2520
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000720

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - JULY 29

Lead story

[¶1.](#) Fifteen hooded individuals ambushed an inter-urban bus in Temuco. They stopped the driver and passengers at gunpoint and spray-painted the exterior of the bus with insults against President Bachelet. The indigenous organization "Coordinadora Arauco Malleco" (CAM) claimed responsibility (La Tercera, conservative, independent, 7/29).

U.S.-Related News

[¶12.](#) The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted in favor of Arturo Valenzuela as Assistant Secretary of State for Hemispheric Affairs. The full Senate has now to confirm his nomination (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, 7/29).

[¶13.](#) Holding company CENCOSUR filed a complaint against Wal Mart's D&S supermarket chain for misleading comparative advertisement (La Segunda, conservative, afternoon daily, 7/28).

[¶14.](#) American entrepreneur Douglas Tompkins said that the eruption of the Chaiten volcano last year sustains his argument that the extension of the Southern Highway should go along the coast and not through his park. Minister of Public Works Sergio Bitar, however, said that the "political decision" has been made and that the highway will run through the park (La Segunda, 7/28).

Science and Technology

[¶15.](#) Yesterday, at the National Science Academy that is headquartered at University of Talca, Ohio University scientists Bryan Marks and Lonnie Thomson presented further evidence on the rate at which glaciers are melting. They strongly urged the need to plan ahead to confront the effects that this phenomenon will have worldwide, such as the decrease in water resources. This was a U.S. Embassy event (El Mercurio, 7/29).

Local economy

[¶16.](#) The copper mining industry is recovering. At the worst point of the crisis there were only 900 producers, but today there are over 1,200, and yesterday the price of copper was US\$2.55 per pound (El Mercurio, 7/29).

Sebastian Pinera

[¶17.](#) Former President Patricio Aylwin, unlike other "Concertacion"

officials, said Sebastian Pinera does not need to explain his situation in 1982, when he faced charges for bank fraud, because "he was absolved and was not sentenced for any crime" (El Mercurio, 7/29).

¶8. Nelson Rivera, former member of the Financial Crime Brigade that was ordered to detain Sebastian Pinera in 1982, said they had looked for Pinera, but had been unable to locate him. Rivera said they had even interviewed the candidate's wife who had admitted that Pinera's location "was unknown," although he was aware of the pending warrant of arrest (La Nacion, government-owned, 7/29).

Honduras

¶9. Honduran de facto government officials can travel abroad freely. But this might change with the U.S. announcement that its embassy in Tegucigalpa had revoked the visas of four Micheletti officials, as the decision might extend to other members of the de facto government (La Nacion, 7/29).

Banking Secrecy

¶10. The GOC is paving the way for Chile to join the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) this year and will submit today an observation to a draft bill in Congress to lift banking secrecy (La Tercera, 7/29).

Nuclear energy

¶11. Julio Vergara, a former member of Chile's Nuclear Energy Commission, criticized the government's strategy to design a nuclear energy development policy. Vergara said reports by foreign companies do not provide knowledge, adding that such a project should be designed by nuclear experts, of which Chile has none. "Tell me how many individuals with graduate studies on nuclear energy there are in Chile. None," stressed Vergara (El Mercurio, 7/29).

SIMONS